

## Flu Season Update

By Barbara Milhaven

Have you gotten your flu shot yet? The flu season in North Carolina runs from November to April and basically you have until March to get your shot if you have not already done so. These shots are only good for one year so you need to get one each year.

Many people, particularly older folks, are worried about an impending Avian Flu pandemic in the United States. A pandemic is a widespread epidemic covering a large geographic area. There is always a threat of a pandemic occurring here at sometime, but the particular bird flu outbreak in Southeast Asia and now Turkey, I believe, shows no signs of coming to our shores. According to information put out by the N.C. Division of Health we are, however, prepared in the event this does happen. Human infection from birds is quite rare and this avian influenza has not resulted in a pandemic because this virus does not have the ability at this time to be efficiently transmitted from person to person.

There have been three influenza pandemics during the 20<sup>th</sup> century; the Spanish Flu, 1918, the Asian Flu, 1957 and the Hong Kong Flu, 1968. The most

devastating of these was the Spanish Flu. The state division of public health tells us that "an influenza pandemic occurs when a new virus appears against which the human population has no immunity, resulting in several, simultaneous epidemics worldwide with enormous numbers of deaths and illness." This same agency believes that it is prepared in the event we have a problem here. It has been working since October, 2004 with many partners to respond to all types of flu as never before.

The flu shot you should get each year does not protect you from the strain of avian flu referred to here. There are also other avian flu varieties in the US that do not pose a serious health threat to humans. For these, exercising proper hygiene when handling bird feeders and preparing and well as cooking poultry properly should protect you from these viruses. Proper cooking kills the flu virus and other organisms that cause sickness.

You can find out more about the N.C. Pandemic Flu Response Plan on the internet at [www.ncpublichealth.com](http://www.ncpublichealth.com). The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) website at [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu) and the World Health Organization website at [www.who.int](http://www.who.int).

## Conduct Waterway Depth Survey

By Robert Howd, Executive Officer, Ft. Macon Sail and Power Squadron

Last Dec. 21 members of the Ft. Macon Sail and Power Squadron conducted a depth survey of the Pine Knoll Shores Waterway. Pine Knoll Shores residents John Halada, Paul Heim and Jack Cummins together with non-resident Robert Howd, participated. The purpose of the survey was to determine where the waterway had become filled in so that dredging requirements could be estimated.

Thirty points were identified on the main waterway and approximately another 20 on the branches and in the marinas. These were fairly well spaced locations and were also at critical locations, such as the bridges. Latitudes and longitudes were recorded with a hand-held GPS and the depths were determined with standard fish-finder sonar.

After recording all the data points, the data was assembled into written and pictorial reports. The values that were recorded are very close to being what the depth was at low tide that day. Each sounding of less than five feet was presented in red. The report was presented to the Pine Knoll Shores Board of Commissioners on Jan. 9.

Surveys such as this are part of the cooperative charting

public service the Ft. Macon Sail and Power Squadron provides. The depth survey done here is somewhat unusual because depth surveys are typically done to provide updates to navigational charts. When charted items do not match up with what we actually find, the new data is reported to National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, which then updates the charts.

Other public service areas the Ft. Macon Sail and Power Squadron participate in are vessel safety checks and safe boating classes. Vessel safety checks let you know that your boat has the proper safety equipment. Safe boating classes teach you proper boating skills. The basic safe boating classes are available to the public. The more advanced classes are for members only.



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